UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Most or Flanagan - Int. 5634

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NEW NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ESTABLISHED ON ATLANTIC COAST IN GEORGIA

Establishment of a 2,686-acre Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, 45 miles south of Savannah, in Georgia, through the transfer of land from the Federal Aviation Agency to the Fish and Wildlife Service was announced today by the Department of the Interior. The new refuge is an important link in a chain of National Wildlife Refuges along the Atlantic Coast.

The Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge will fill two important needs of the National Wildlife Refuge System. A closely associated group of relatively small refuges, including Harris Island, Blackbeard, and Savannah, will make this area the only sanctuary for Canada geese between the Santee Refuge in South Carolina and the St. Marks Refuge in Florida. The new unit will provide mainland headquarters and boat landing for the refuge on Blackbeard Island.

The Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge will also have considerable value for public recreation, according to the Service's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife which will administer the new area. There are excellent sites along the Newport River which lend themselves to future recreational development. A 900-acre salt marsh on the refuge provides excellent clapper rail habitat and will make possible an additional public hunting area for these birds.

The new refuge contains over 600 acres of timber and brushland and approximately 1,100 acres of agricultural land. The 1,100 acres of open land make it relatively inexpensive to develop the refuge as a Canada Goose area.

Because the Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge was established by transfer of Federal lands, acquisition of the new area was at no cost to the Department of the Interior. An existing boat dock, improved roads, fences, some of the buildings, and other Government facilities will be used in refuge management of the area.